



Sustainable Conservation

Regulatory Coordination to Facilitate Reduction of Non-Point Source Pollution in California

Nicole Martin, Sustainable Conservation

Partners in Restoration Permit Coordination Program

Tackling a Key Barrier to Voluntary Conservation

Landowners are refraining from performing critical, voluntary conservation and restoration activities because regulatory compliance for these projects is too complex and costly

Elkhorn Slough Pilot Program





NRCS and RCDs

**Building trust
Agricultural partners**



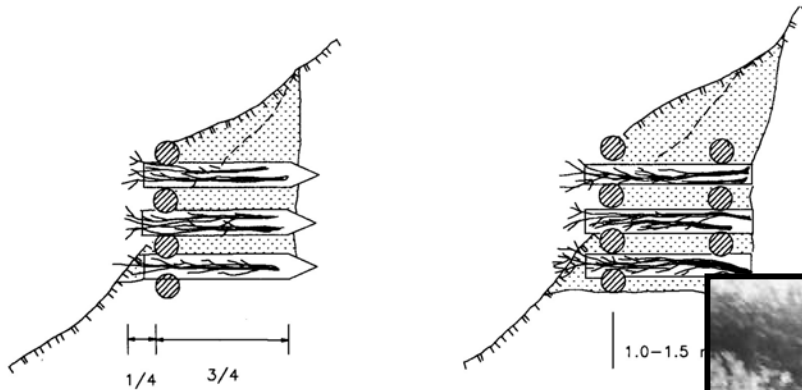
Filter Strip



-Strip or area of vegetation for trapping sediment, organic matter, and other pollutants from runoff

Streambank Protection

-Using vegetation or structures to stabilize and protect streambanks



Live Vegetated Crib Wall



Sediment Basin



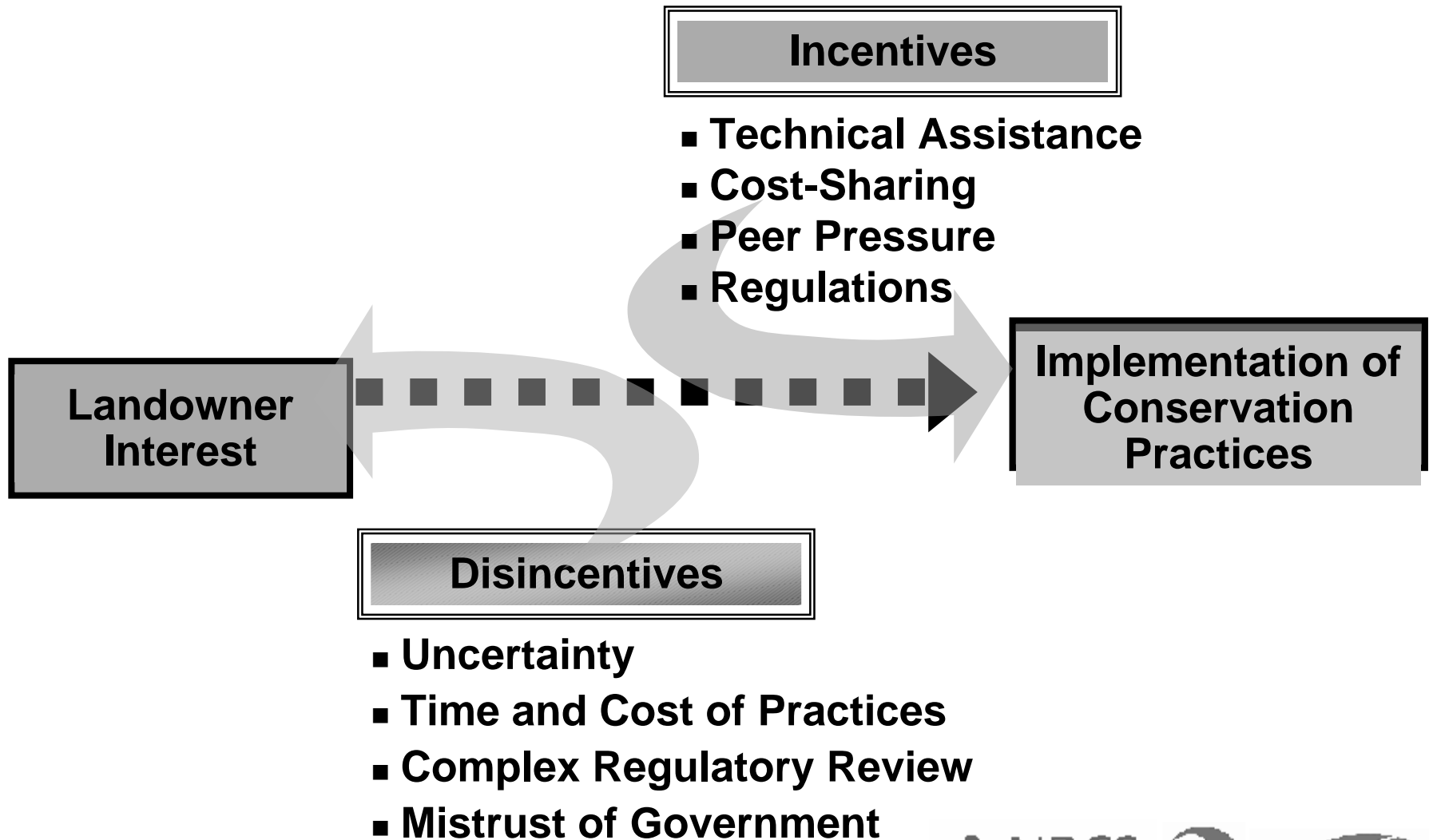
- Constructed to collect and store debris or sediment
- Prevent sediment deposition in streams



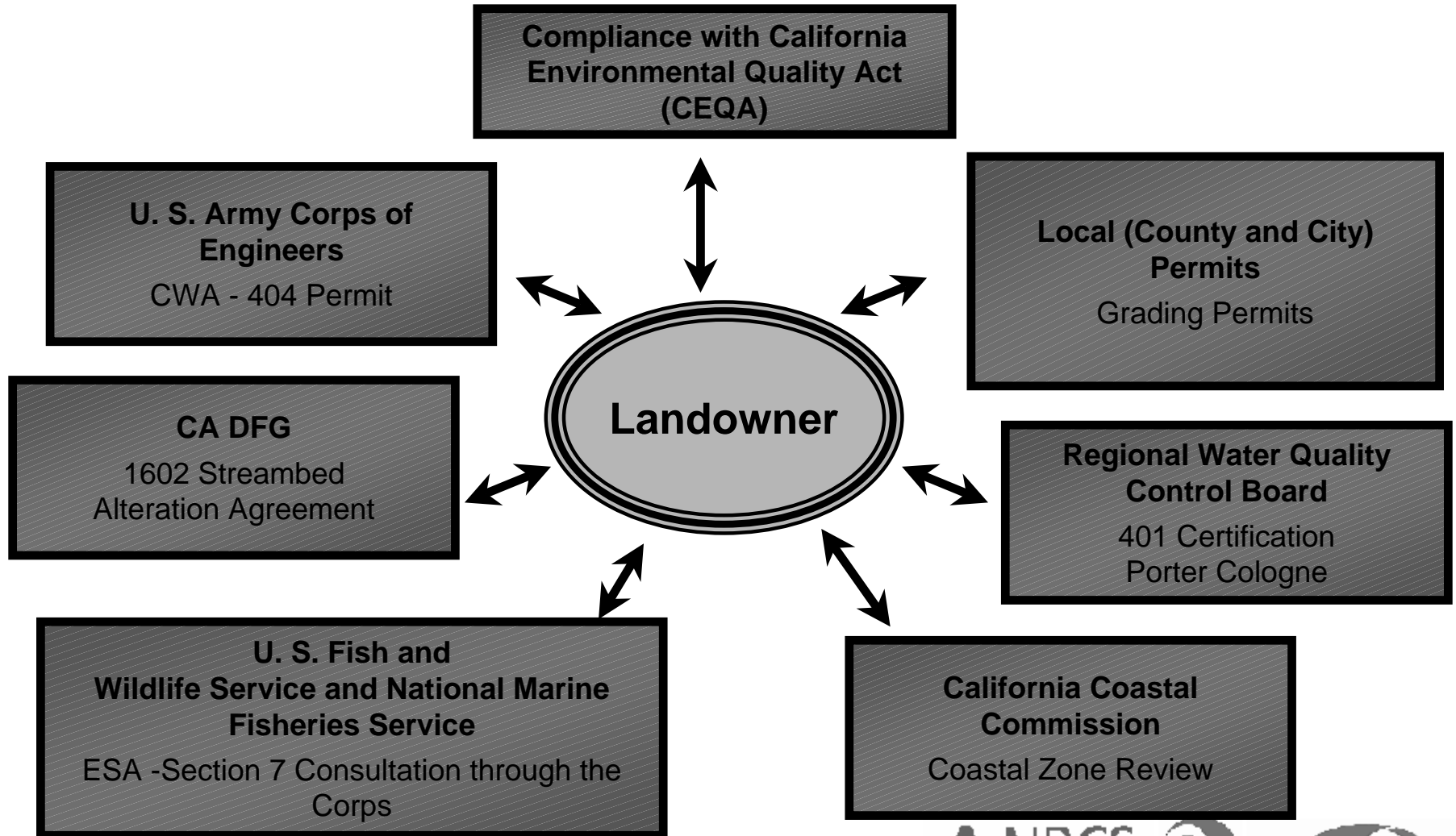
Access Road Improvement



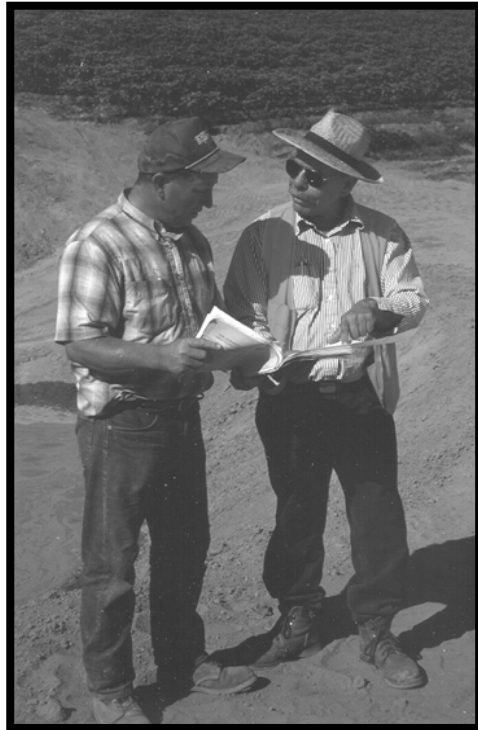
Incentives and Disincentives for Voluntary Conservation Activities



Permits That Could be Required to Repair a Stream Bank



One Tool: The Partners in Restoration Permit Coordination Program



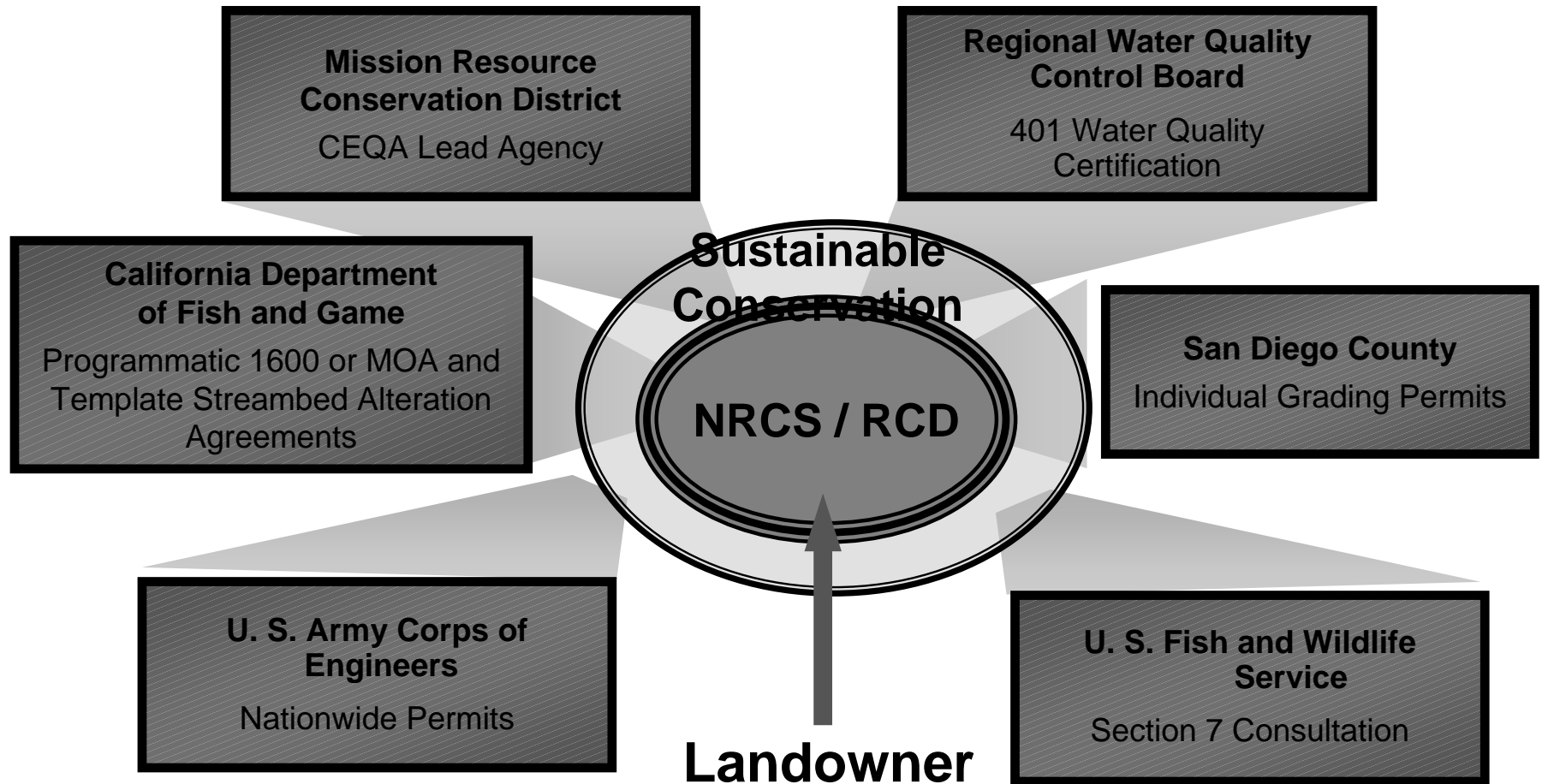
- Regulatory coordination for small scale conservation and restoration projects
- Regulatory agencies issue “umbrella” permits for proven conservation activities
- Relies on partnership with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) in development and administration of the program
- Alleviates permitting burden for landowners interested in undertaking voluntary conservation activities

Coordination Strategy

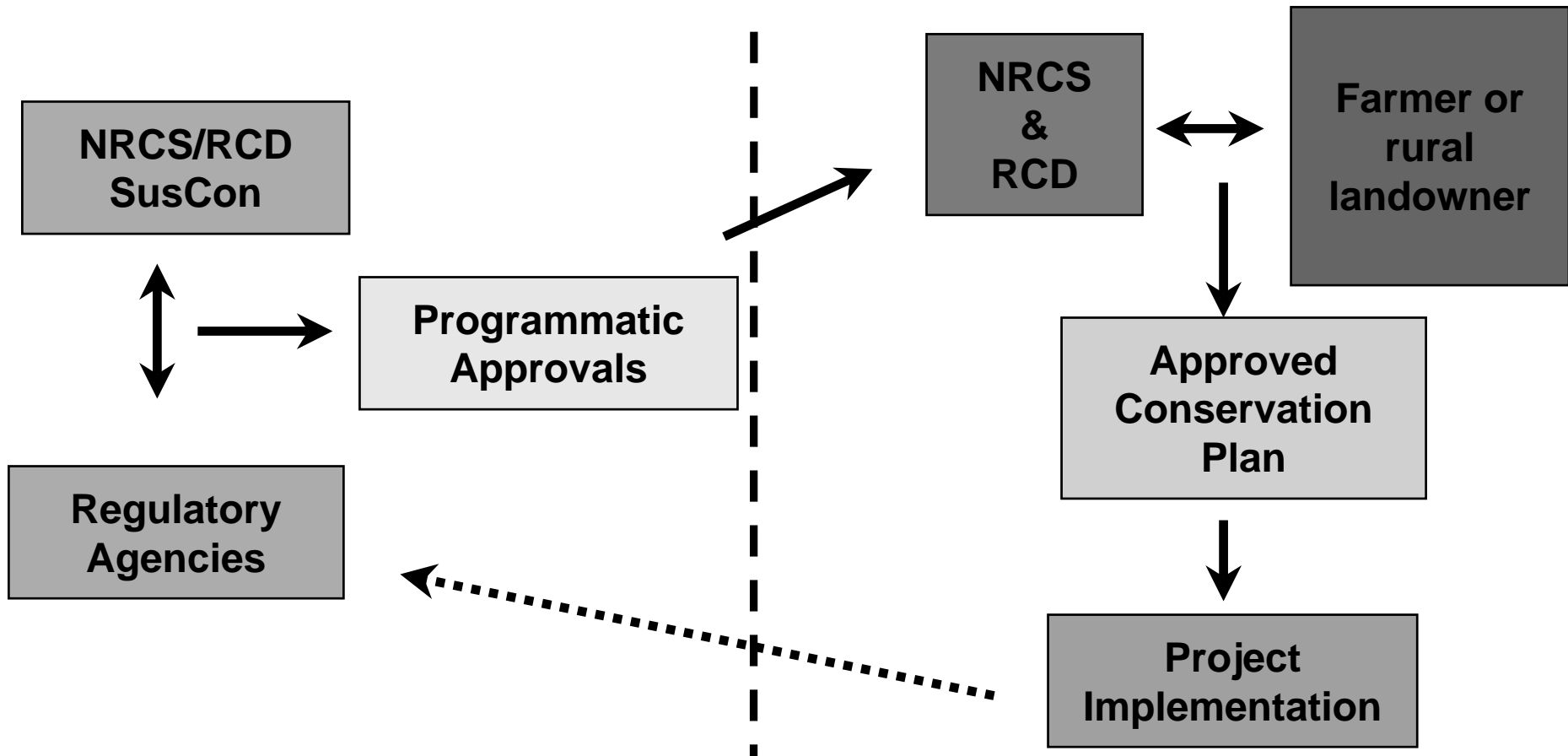
- **Select conservation practices for coverage**
- **Convene Agencies**
- **Tour Representative Sites & Practices**
- **Develop County-specific practice conditions with agencies and RCD and NRCS**
- **Revisions...and more revision**
- **Final Agency Approvals**
- **Projects implemented with oversight by RCD/NRCS**
- **Evaluation and Reporting**



Regulatory Coordination to Encourage Environmentally Beneficial Work



Overview of the Partners in Restoration Permit Coordination Program Model



How are Water Quality Improvements Facilitated by the Program?

- Program sets up a framework to ease permitting challenges
- Permitting is only one piece of the puzzle: Funding, technical assistance, and landowner willingness are all key
- NRCS, RCDs, and the landowners are making the on-the-ground impact on reducing non-point source pollution from private lands

Easing the Regulatory Challenges Allows for Environmental Benefits

- Higher quality projects and more projects on the ground
- Enhancement of wildlife habitat
- Enhancement of buffers between working landscapes and waterways
- Reduction of sediment and pollutant transport into waterways

Quantifying the Environmental Benefits

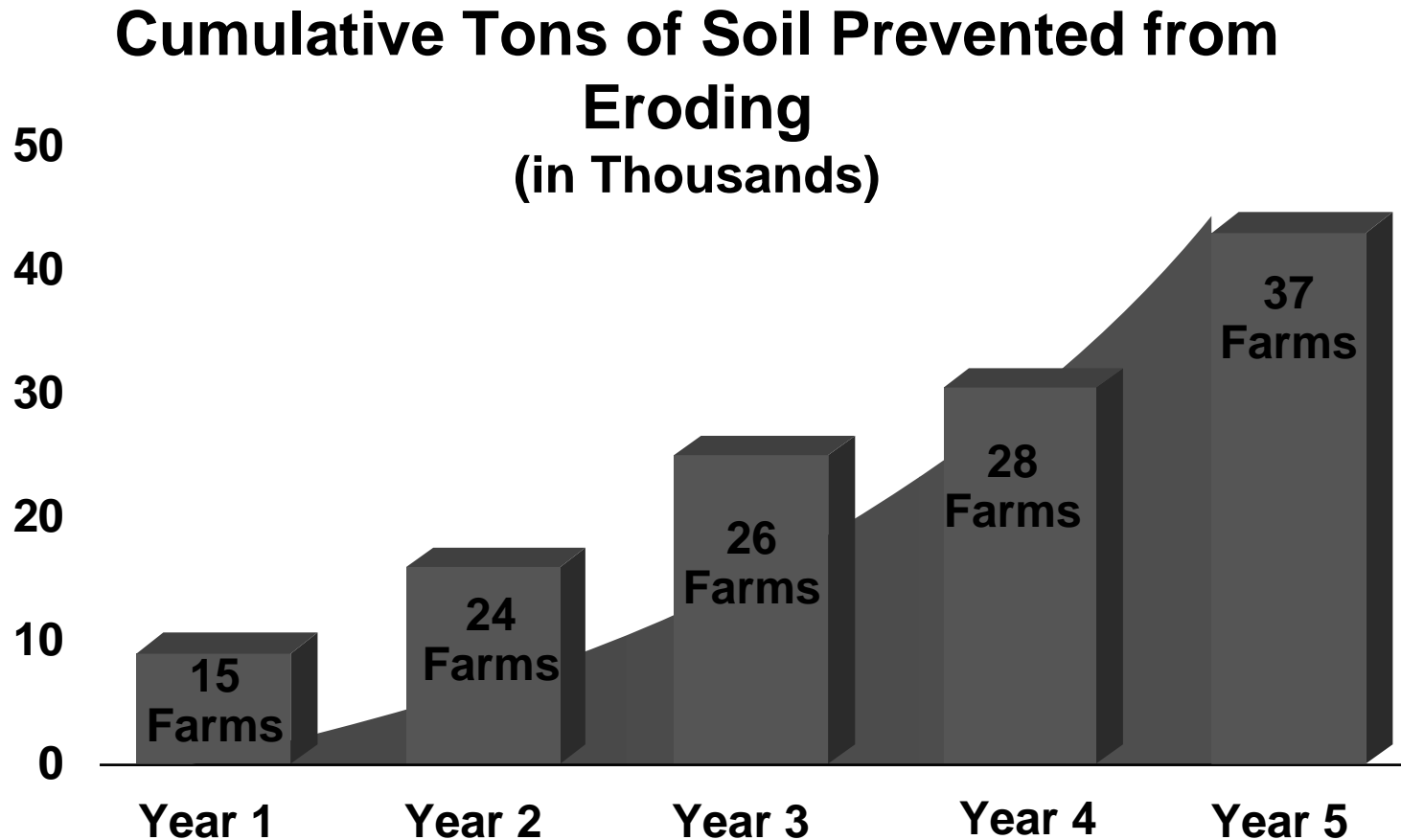
- Number of projects implemented
- Size of projects (x miles of stream riparian habitat restored)
- NRCS estimates of sediment reduction for various types of practices

1998 Pilot Program: The Elkhorn Slough Permit Coordination Program



- 37 projects completed since 1998
- More than 60,000 tons of sediment prevented from entering the Elkhorn Slough and the Monterey Bay
- More than two miles of stream restored

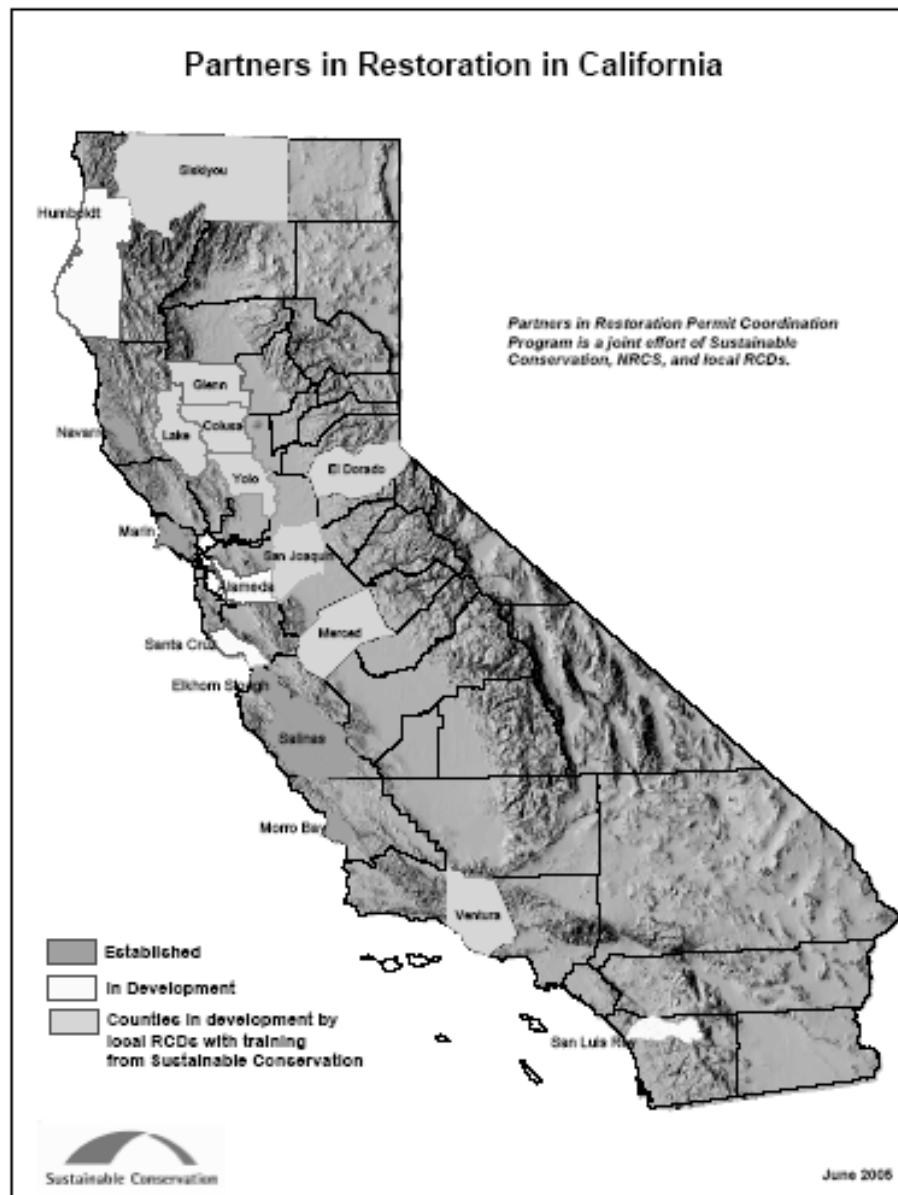
Elkhorn Slough Pilot Results



Permit Coordination in California

Recommended in:

- ***“Removing Barriers to Restoration” (Resources Agency Task Force Report, 2003)***
- ***“Addressing the Need to Protect California’s Watersheds: Working in Partnerships” AB 2117 Report (Resources Agency 2002)***
- ***Water Quality Protection Program Action Plan IV: Agriculture and Rural Lands (Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary 1999)***



What Makes a Match for Permit Coordination?

- Good NRCS/RCD Partners
- Landowners who want to do the conservation work
- Focus efforts on the work you know needs to be accomplished
- Permits the real problem?
- Relatively small scale projects
- Worth the time

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